

***Salix vestita* Pursh var. *erecta* Anderss.**

rock willow

Salicaceae (Willow Family)

Status: State Possibly Extirpated

Rank: G5T3T4QSH

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1964): *Salix vestita* var. *erecta* is a stout, 8 to 40 in. (.25-1 m) tall, crooked, angular shrub with brown twigs that are glabrous or scarcely covered with long, soft hairs. There are apparently no stipules (leaf like appendages at the base of the petioles). The stout petioles (leaf stalks) are mostly 1/8 to 1/3 in. (4-10 mm) long. The green leaf blades are thick, firm and become glabrous with age; there are sunken veins on the upper surface, and the under-surface is more or less persistently covered with soft white hairs. The leaf blades are elliptic to broadly egg-shaped, ¾ to 2 1/3 in. (2-6 cm) long, 1/3 to 1½ in. (1-4 cm) wide, with broadly rounded to pointed tips. The leaf margins slightly roll back towards the underside, and are commonly scattered with very inconspicuous glands. The inflorescences (aments) are dense spikes of unisexual flowers that lack petals and are borne on naked flower stalks at the end of some of the principal leafy shoots of the season. The scales of the flowers are brown, persistent, and conspicuously covered with soft hairs, though often glabrate just below the tip. The stamen-bearing flowers are 1/3 to 2 in. (1-5 cm) long at maturity. The capsules are stalkless or nearly so, and covered with soft hairs, 1/8 to ¼ in. (3-5 mm) long, stoutly egg-shaped, and not obviously beaked.

Identification Tips: *Salix vestita* var. *erecta* is a fairly taxonomically distinct. However, in Washington it is closely related to another alpine willow, *S. nivalis*, and can be distinguished by its habit. *S. vestita* var. *erecta* a dwarf shrub 8 to 40 in. (.25-1 m) tall, while *S. nivalis* is a mat forming plant that is up to 4 in. (0.1 m) tall.

Phenology: Throughout its range this taxon is identifiable from July to September, but phenology may vary by elevation and latitude.

Range: This taxon is distributed in the Rocky Mountain region from southern Alberta and adjacent British Columbia to Montana, Oregon, and Washington (Chelan County).

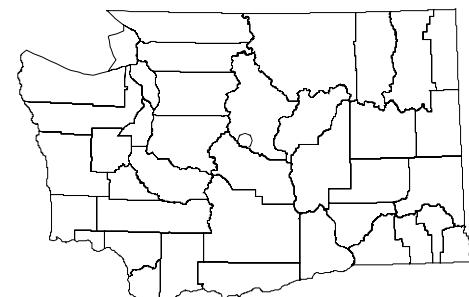
Salix vestita* var. *erecta

rock willow



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Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish

Known distribution
of *Salix vestita* var. *erecta*
in Washington



- Current (1980+)
- Historic (older than 1980)

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Lorna Allen, Alberta Government



Patricia McIsaac, Alberta Government

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Habitat: In Washington this taxon was found at 7000 feet (2133 m) elevation.

Ecology: This taxon typically occurs in open, often springy places at high altitudes in the mountains, commonly near or above the timberline.

State Status Comments: In Washington *Salix vestita* var. *erecta* is known from only one historical occurrence from 1884.

Inventory Needs: The one known occurrence should be revisited for updated population, phenological and ecological information. Additional inventory in open springy places at high altitudes near or above the timberline is needed.

Threats and Management Concerns: As with other dwarf willows, the taxon is easily damaged by livestock trampling and grazing, and by foot traffic (Kovalchik 2003).

Comments: Hitchcock et al. (1964) refer to this taxon as *Salix vestita* Pursh.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson.
1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 2: Salicaceae to Saxifragaceae*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 597 pp.

Kartesz, J.T., and C.A. Meacham. 2003. *Synthesis of the North American Flora, Version 2.0*. Copyright © 2003 J.T. Kartesz & Phylosystems Corp.

Kovalchik, B.L. 2003. Riparian and wetland plant identification guide for eastern Washington. DRAFT. Report on file with Bureau of Land Management, Wenatchee office.